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Limiting Conventional Forces in Europe

William R. Bowman

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Limiting
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Limiting Conventional Forces in Europe

An Alternative to the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Negotiations

William R. Bowman

A National Security Affairs Monograph

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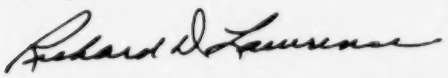
Foreword

PUBLIC CONCERN about the East-West arms race has focused on nuclear weapons and their potential for global destruction. But while the Soviet Bloc has amassed a redoubtable nuclear arsenal, it has also built up its conventional, non-nuclear force. This buildup has left NATO not only facing a powerful conventional force, but facing that force without the off-setting advantage of nuclear superiority to assure deterrence. To counter Warsaw Pact strength and avoid a conventional arms race, NATO entered into Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction negotiations in 1973. Thus far, however, no treaty has been produced.

In this monograph, Lieutenant Colonel William R. Bowman, US Air Force, reviews the MBFR negotiations and the military balance in Central Europe. Addressing MBFR proposals from both Eastern and Western perspectives, Colonel Bowman concludes that an MBFR treaty based on present negotiating positions will not improve NATO's readiness in rela-

tion to the Warsaw Pact. In fact, he suggests that an MBFR agreement will alter the military balance in Europe to NATO's marked disadvantage.

Colonel Bowman proposes that the Allies, rather than continuing to work toward an MBFR accord, pursue more actively the negotiations at the ongoing Conference on Disarmament in Europe--an alternative which Bowman thinks offers superior opportunities for success. The National Defense University is pleased to publish this consideration of how to best attain military stability in Europe and to best avert the possibility of a nuclear conflict in Europe.



Richard D. Lawrence
Lieutenant General, US Army
President, National Defense
University

Preface

FOR MANY YEARS, NATO enjoyed the luxury of nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies. This nuclear advantage enabled NATO to rest reasonably assured that the Warsaw Pact, despite its conventional force superiority, would not risk a military confrontation in Europe. The Soviets recognized their disadvantage and, starting in the early 1970s, began earnestly to build up their military forces. The prolonged buildup, still going on today, has enabled the Soviets to close the nuclear force gap and further expand their conventional force advantages relative to NATO.

This alteration in the NATO–Warsaw Pact force balance threatens the credibility of NATO's strategy of flexible response. Without the nuclear advantage, NATO finds itself without a "hammer" to deter Soviet–Warsaw Pact aggression and control the level of escalation if conflict does occur. At the same time, without a conventional force capable of deterring and successfully confronting a

conventional attack, NATO finds itself overly dependent on a nuclear response to stay in the fight.

To preclude the possibility of an early nuclear exchange, NATO is now focusing seriously on improvements in its conventional forces. NATO is also trying to deal with the conventional force disparity through arms control—specifically, the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) Negotiations, whose objective is to reduce military manpower of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact to a common ceiling of 900,000. After 11 years of negotiation, however, no agreement has been reached and the prospect of an accord is not good.

The doubtful prospect of an agreement being reached does not ease my concern that if an MBFR accord *is* reached based upon current negotiating objectives, NATO will be at a further conventional force disadvantage. I base my conclusions on the premise that manpower, the focus of MBFR, is not the primary cause of instability in the East-West balance, and on the fact that NATO critically needs *more* manpower to meet readiness standards and modernize its forces. A reduction in manpower would, therefore, only exacerbate problems that exist today and ultimately decrease rather than increase military stability in Central Europe. In essence, I maintain that MBFR objectives do not complement or support NATO's current efforts to improve its conventional force posture.

I believe, however, that useful goals in the realm of conventional arms control can be pursued. I will discuss these goals and a practical method of pursuing them in the final section of this monograph.

Limiting
Conventional Forces
in Europe

1.
Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction

WITH ALL THE ATTENTION RECENTLY GIVEN to nuclear parity, a very critical military concern seems to have fallen by the wayside: NATO's ability to fight a conventional (non-nuclear) war in Europe against the Warsaw Pact nations. Could NATO win a conventional war with its present troop and armament strength? If the answer is no, then the Allies must find a way to even the odds. Otherwise, once a conventional war begins, NATO's only hope for winning will be to escalate quickly to a nuclear strategy. But the results of that would be, needless to say, devastating; so the NATO goal must be to keep the

fighting on the conventional level until an armistice can be reached.

Our present information shows NATO to be at a disadvantage against the Warsaw Pact; therefore, NATO has taken steps to improve its fighting capability. One step has been negotiations with the Warsaw Pact to limit and balance the number of combat troops in Europe, known as the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) Negotiations. MBFR has taken on the aura of being the solution to NATO'S problems; but that, I believe, is a dangerous misconception. While I think MBFR has some merit, the flaws negate the benefits. My purpose, therefore, is to point out these flaws and propose a better solution.

The road to MBFR negotiations

A common NATO–Warsaw Pact interest in arms control didn't begin to emerge until the late 1960s. From the end of World War II to that time, the Soviets were concerned with eliminating what they saw as a German military threat. The Soviets hoped to achieve this objective by neutralizing West Germany and somehow unifying East and West Germany under communist control. Specific arms control measures proposed by the Soviets were, therefore, designed either to promote a communist-controlled and neutralized Germany or to counter Allied initiatives to rearm West Germany and integrate the nation into NATO.[1]

Despite being faced by a large Soviet military threat, the West considered arms control a secondary problem to that of an overall European settlement—the main goal of which was the reunification of a Germany free to choose its form of government. If, as the West hoped, a unified Germany chose to join NATO, the Western powers were prepared to consider proposals that would allay Eastern fears that Germany could again become a military force. But when an East-West agreement on reunifying Germany couldn't be reached, concern over the Soviet–Warsaw Pact superiority in conventional military forces overshadowed further Western interest in arms control.

In the mid-1960s, however, Eastern and Western attitudes toward arms control changed. The Soviets realized that a neutralized Germany under their domination was not to be and that their arms control proposals designed to slow the development of the West German Army also had failed. As a result, the Soviets chose to consolidate their gains and shift their emphasis away from disarmament, toward an agreement that would formally recognize the post–World War II boundaries of Eastern Europe. They proposed a European security conference with the stated goal of discussing measures that would insure the collective security of Europe. The Soviets' primary purpose was to have the conference ratify and declare permanent the Oder-Niesse border between Poland and Germany, the division of Germany into two states, and the political and social systems of East Germany and other Eastern European countries.[2]

The West began in the mid-1960s to experience new pressures which made arms control more attractive. In 1966 and 1967, NATO was battling high inflation and the Western European countries were looking for ways to reduce the high cost of defense. Meanwhile, the escalating American involvement in Vietnam was raising doubts as to whether the United States could afford to keep its large force in Europe. Many Americans, including Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, felt that the United States should make a substantial unilateral troop reduction in Europe because of the commitments and financial strain of the Vietnam War.[3] These pressures, combined with the fact that there was a general relaxation of tension with the Soviet Union, led the West to begin considering arms control measures as the best way to deal with the Warsaw Pact.

NATO's interest in exploring mutual force reductions with the Soviet Union became known in the spring of 1967, when the NATO Council, meeting in Luxembourg, included the following statement in its communique:

> If conditions permit, a balanced reduction of forces by the East and West could be a significant step toward security in Europe. A contribution on the part of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries towards a reduction of forces would be welcomed as a gesture of peaceful intent.[4]

During a meeting in Brussels later that year, the NATO foreign ministers adopted a report entitled

The Future Tasks of the Alliance. The study, conducted under the chairmanship of Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel (the report became known as the "Harmel Report") concluded that the NATO Alliance had two basic functions: to maintain adequate military strength and political solidarity to deter aggression, and to search for areas in which to build a more stable relationship to solve underlying political issues. It was, however, the thirteenth point of the report that set in motion events that led to the MBFR negotiations:

> 13. The allies are studying disarmament and practical arms control measures, including the possibility of balanced force reductions. The studies will be intensified. Their active pursuit reflects the will of the allies to work for an effective detente with the East.[5]

Six months later, the NATO Ministerial Conference, meeting in Reykjavik, issued a declaration explaining the principles that would govern the study of arms control. At the same time, the West made an official offer to the East to join NATO in a search for progress toward peace through mutual force reductions. The principles stated,[6]

> (a) Mutual force reductions should be reciprocal and balanced in scope and timing.
>
> (b) Mutual reductions should represent a substantial and significant step, which will serve to maintain the present degree of security at reduced cost, but should not be

such as to risk de-stabilizing the situation in Europe.

(c) Mutual reductions should be consonant with the aim of creating confidence in Europe generally and in the case of each party concerned.

(d) To this end, any new arrangement regarding forces should be consistent with the vital security interests of all parties and capable of being carried out effectively.

Now both East and West had proposed formal negotiations on the security of Central Europe—a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) from the East, Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) Negotiations from the West. But neither side was ready to accept the other's invitation. For 4 years, both sides "talked past" each other, the East desiring security in the form of the status quo and the West desiring force reductions.[7]

Finally, in a series of cautious and interrelated steps in 1970 and 1971, NATO and the Warsaw Pact began to move toward negotiations on force reductions in Central Europe. In August 1970, the West German government concluded treaties with the Soviet Union and Poland, accepting the post-war boundaries and the political status quo. In late 1971, arrangements were made that satisfied a Western demand that the Soviets and East Germans end their attempts to isolate West Berlin from West Germany.[8]

Bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union played an important role in bringing about the mutual force reduction talks. At the May 1972 Moscow summit meeting, where the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I) was signed, President Nixon and Soviet Premier Brezhnev agreed that a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe should be convened without delay and that an agreement on the procedures for negotiating troop reductions in Central Europe would be reached. Thus was struck a two-part bargain that drew each side into negotiations for which it had little enthusiasm in exchange for negotiations it desired.[9]

The beginning of MBFR talks

Formal MBFR negotiations began in Vienna on 30 October 1973, based upon three principles agreed to in early exploratory talks:[10]

- The general objective of the negotiations is to contribute to a more stable relationship and to the strengthening of peace and security in Europe without diminishing the security of any party to the negotiations.

- The subject matter of the negotiations is to be "mutual reduction of forces and armaments and associated measures in Central Europe."

- The area of force reduction is the territory of seven countries: the two Germanies, the Western states of Belgium, the Netherlands,

and Luxembourg; and the Eastern states of Poland and Czechoslovakia.

It was also agreed that only the nations with troops in the affected countries would be bound by subsequent agreements. Therefore, the participants on the Western side included the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, West Germany, and the Benelux countries; the Eastern participants included the Soviet Union, East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. All other NATO and Warsaw Pact countries participating in the negotiations were categorized as special participants; these special participants included Norway, Denmark, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.[11]

A few points of disagreement also surfaced during the exploratory talks. The West for a number of years had called for Mutual Balanced Force Reduction negotiations as a counter to Soviet proposals for a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. NATO felt that the Soviet proposals failed to deal with the real source of tension in Central Europe—the military confrontation. In making its MBFR proposal, NATO had stipulated balanced force reductions to imply that the Warsaw Pact would be required to take larger reductions than would NATO. But according to a 1983 congressional report, the East found this implication objectionable, and the idea of balanced reductions remains a stumbling block in the path toward an MBFR agreement.[12]

Another key area of disagreement concerned the West's requirement for the inclusion of then-unspecified inspection and confidence building measures to complement and insure compliance with a reduction agreement. The Warsaw Pact argued that an agremeent on reduction of forces and armaments should come first, and then the two sides could discuss how each could verify the other side's reductions.[13]

These differing perceptions of what would constitute an acceptable agreement led to a number of compromises. The East insisted that the term "balanced" be omitted and that verification measures be referred to as "associated measures." Thus, the little-known formal title of the Vienna negotiations became the "Mutual Reduction of Forces and Armaments and Associated Measures in Central Europe."[14]

The real differences in negotiating positions were not clear, however, until formal negotiations began in October 1973. Speaking on the second day of the talks, representatives of the Warsaw Pact and NATO laid out their respective positions. The Eastern representative stated that he hoped and believed the political basis worked out by the general European conference (the CSCE) would be complemented and strengthened by measures for a military relaxation of tension on the continent—from the MBFR talks. He went on to say that the East was approaching the talks seriously but their position was clear and understandable—they considered it necessary that the reduction would involve both foreign

and national forces and be in a defined region of Central Europe. The East also felt it was important that the future reduction not disturb the existing balance of power in Central Europe and on the European continent in general. If this principle was violated, the East representative prophesied, the whole question of force reductions would become a bone of contention and cause unending disputes.[15]

The position laid out by the Western representative clearly differed from the Eastern position. After stating that the overall objective was to achieve a more stable military balance at lower levels of forces with undiminished security for all participants, the Western representative went to the heart of the Allied position. He stated that the West saw three force disparities in the agreed geographical area of reductions: manpower, the character of the forces, and geography.[16] He noted that the Warsaw Pact had more active duty ground troops in Central Europe and that eliminating this disparity through proportional reductions would increase stability. Secondly, Warsaw Pact forces had a larger concentration of heavy armor, namely tanks, in Central Europe, and a substantial reduction by the Soviet Union in armored capability would also enhance stability. As for the geographic disparity, the Western representative noted that any Soviet forces withdrawn from Central Europe into the territory of the Soviet Union could return quickly and easily, as opposed to forces withdrawn to the United States which would be an ocean away. Therefore, Soviet troop strength in Warsaw Pact territories should be further reduced to achieve parity.

The Western representative went on to state that the ultimate goal of the negotiations was to reach equal strength in ground forces in Central Europe, in the form of a common ceiling for both sides. His last and perhaps most important point was that reduction alone would not result in greater stability. Other measures were needed to stabilize, verify, and prevent both parties from circumventing provisions of an agreement.[17]

Thus, the basic battle lines of the MBFR negotiations were drawn. The key differences were equal reductions proposed by the East versus proportional reductions proposed by the West; the implied demand by the East that all forces, to include air and nuclear forces, should be reduced along with ground forces; and the problem of how to compensate for the geographic disparity that would allow the Soviets to reinforce more quickly and easily than the United States.[18]

Areas of agreement

After more than 10 years of negotiation, there is general agreement on what elements should be included in an MBFR treaty, but serious differences remain on the details of some of the more significant elements. The Warsaw Pact and NATO have presented the current negotiating positions in the form of draft treaties: the Western Draft Treaty of 8 July 1982 and the Eastern Draft Treaty of 23 June 1983. A discussion of the areas of agreement and the outstanding issues follows.

Common manpower ceiling. From the beginning, the West has specified that its primary objective was to attain approximate parity or equality in military manpower within the reduction area. By parity, the West meant a common collective manpower ceiling for each side.

In contrast, the East's satisfaction with the military balance formed the basis of the Eastern negotiating principles. Claiming that parity already existed in Central Europe, the East characterized the West's demand for proportional manpower reductions as just a thinly disguised ploy to gain a military advantage. As a result, the East promoted reductions by an equal number or percentage of forces during the early negotiations. The Soviets recently agreed, however, to reduce Warsaw Pact manpower to equal the strength of NATO forces, leading to the most important agreement between the two sides—to reduce military manpower of all direct participants to a common ceiling of 900,000 with a subceiling of 700,000 for ground troops.

Verification procedures. For any agreement to be effective, the West believed there had to be a reliable way to verify force reductions. The East, however, initially showed little interest in even discussing the subject, arguing that such associated measures could not reasonably be negotiated until after an agreement on reductions. The West persisted and in its 1979 proposal included a number of verification measures designed to inject life into the stalled negotiations, perhaps to steer them toward a program

that would help the Allies assess the possibility of a large-scale surprise attack by the Warsaw Pact.[19]

The East has now agreed that a method for verifying compliance and insuring confidence in force reductions should be included in the accord. On the so-called associated measures proposed by both sides, there is agreement in principle on the creation of declared entry and exit points for monitoring movement of troops, the exchange of information on forces, and notification of the other side concerning large troop movements.

A single-phase agreement. Both sides have also agreed that their goal is a single-phase agreement, binding on all direct participants. The United States and the Soviet Union should withdraw troops first, then other direct participants will withdraw troops to complete the reductions. Furthermore, once forces are withdrawn from the reduction area, they should not be redeployed in a fashion that would undermine the validity of the agreement.[20] An example of such a violation would be for the Soviet Union to move Soviet troops stationed in Czechoslovakia, which is in the area of reductions, to a non-reduction country such as Hungary.

Areas of disagreement

Today, despite the progress made, several unresolved issues still stand in the way of an agreement. They include the actual number of Eastern troops currently in the reduction area, limitations on residual forces, the role of associated measures for

verification and compliance, and the inclusion of armaments in reductions.

Data discrepancy. As previously noted, the East agreed to reduce its military manpower to a common ceiling. However, the two sides can't agree on a data base, particularly the definition of active combat troops, from which reductions would be made. As table 1 shows, the West estimates the Warsaw Pact has approximately 170,000 more men in the reduction area than the East will admit to. According to a 1983 congressional report, part of the difference concerns approximately 80,000 Polish troops that the Warsaw Pact claims should not be included in the definition of active combat forces. Other smaller discrepancies involve East German and Czechoslovakian troops; these differences could either be caused by definitional problems or merely fall within a reasonable range of uncertainty in Western intelligence estimates. But the big concern is a discrepancy concerning approximately 50,000 Soviet troops, the equivalent of over four Soviet divisions, that the East has not accounted for.[21] The East considers the data base discrepancy an artificial issue that the West is merely using to postpone serious discussion of mutual manpower reductions.[22]

Limitations on residual forces. The East wants to put subceilings on national forces within the overall limit on force levels. In essence, the East wants some provision in the agreement that will limit and control force levels of the West German Army. The West, in contrast, has been willing to agree

TABLE 1
Discrepancy Between Eastern and Western Estimates of Warsaw Pact Forces

Forces	*Western estimates*	*Eastern estimates*	*Difference*
Ground	962,000	805,000	157,000
Air	200,000	182,300	17,700
TOTAL	1,162,000	987,300	174,700

Source: John G. Keliher, *The Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions: The Search for Arms Control in Europe* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980), p. 123.

only that all direct participants would take significant reductions. The Warsaw Pact has moderated its initial insistence on national subceilings and now proposes that no state provide more than 50 percent of the total authorized manpower for each alliance. The Western Allies previously discussed the 50 percent solution as a way out of the subceiling problem.

Although this issue is regarded as primarily affecting the Germans, it also has implications for the United States. The 50 percent solution could severely limit the ability of NATO to reallocate forces and would tend to lock the United States into whatever reduced force levels were agreed to. Consequently, US withdrawals could not be compensated for by increases in the West German Army, and the shortfall under the common ceiling would have to

be filled by forces from other Allies less likely or able to contribute more manpower.[23]

Associated measures for verification and compliance. The West insists that simply reducing forces won't provide greater stability and other measures are needed to stabilize, verify, and prevent both parties from circumventing the provisions of the agreement. Although initially reluctant to even discuss the subject, the East did eventually suggest some less stringent methods to ensure compliance with an accord. The East's proposed associated measures include prior notification of ground force movements exceeding 20,000 troops, the establishment of permanent entry and exit points for observation after reductions are completed, and voluntary participation to observe reductions and make annual on-site inspections. The West, though, has pushed for a much broader and more vigorous verification program that would include prior notification of any out-of-garrison activities, the exchange of observers at prenotified activities, and 18 annual on-site inspections. These measures would complement the ability of intelligence to monitor compliance, but they are more important for building political confidence in the other side and reducing the possibility of a Warsaw Pact surprise attack on NATO.[24]

Inclusion of armaments reductions. In regard to armaments, the East's position in MBFR has been fairly consistent. In its first proposal, for equal percentage reductions by both sides, the East stipulated that all types of forces and armaments—ground, air, and nuclear—would be included. It has softened

that position somewhat but maintains that armaments withdrawals should be included along with whatever manpower reductions are taken; as a minimum, forces departing from the area of reductions would take their equipment with them.

The Western position on armaments reductions has changed over the years. During the first 5 years of negotiations, NATO insisted that Soviet withdrawals take the form of a tank army, complete with all of its equipment. At the time, two Soviet tank armies were deployed in East Germany opposite weak sectors of NATO's defenses, within easy striking distance of the Ruhr and the channel ports. Each army consisted of 68,000 troops; 1,700 tanks; and 8,700 infantry fighting vehicles, armored personnel carriers, artillery pieces, antitank weapons, and air defense systems. The United States in return was going to take an equal 15 percent reduction in manpower—29,000 troops—but without withdrawing any equipment.[25] The proposal was designed to help eliminate the principal advantage the Soviets enjoyed in Central Europe at the time: the geographic advantage of having to withdraw forces to only 600 kilometers from the inter-German border as opposed to 6,000 kilometers for US forces.

In December 1975 the West sweetened its reduction proposal to include Western armaments. The United States declared its willingness to withdraw 1,000 nuclear wearheads with certain delivery systems, 54 nuclear-capable F–4 aircraft, and 36 Pershing I missile launchers. Known as "Option III," this initiative opened the door to the prospect of re-

ductions of and limitations on Western as well as Eastern armaments.[26] The West offered a further concession in April 1978 by dropping its demand for the removal of a Soviet tank army and calling instead for the withdrawal of 68,000 troops and 1,700 tanks from any five Soviet divisions in the reduction area. But the East failed to respond seriously to the Western proposals.

The issue of armament withdrawals was totally eliminated when the United States tabled a new proposal in December 1979, calling for a reduction of 30,000 Soviet troops versus 13,000 US troops. Several factors led the West to modify its earlier proposals and eliminate armaments reductions. The most important of these factors was the NATO decision to modernize its theater nuclear force with ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) and Pershing IIs and to unilaterally withdraw 1,000 nuclear warheads.[27] These decisions left the West with no bargaining power in terms of armaments. Rather than continue with the unrealistic hope that the Soviets would agree to a one-sided weaponry withdrawal, the United States decided to defer the issue of armaments withdrawals to follow-on discussions.

The West continues to resist reductions of its armaments because of the problem of bringing them back. NATO's defensive strategy depends heavily on how quickly reinforcing US ground and air units can get to Europe. To help compensate for deficiencies in the air- and sealift support needed to transport large numbers of men and large amounts of equipment across the Atlantic, the United States has

begun to place equipment in Europe for its reinforcing units (referred to as prepositioning). Reducing equipment levels, therefore, would only worsen the reinforcement problem, particularly because the Soviets would have much less difficulty moving withdrawn equipment back to the reduction area in times of crisis. The West also feels that finding an equitable and effective method of measuring conventional armament capabilities would be very difficult, as would establishing a data base from which to start reductions.

Prospects for a formal agreement

The Soviet walkout from the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) negotiations has left the United States and its European Allies anxious for progress in MBFR talks if for no other reason than to validate the sincerity of Western interest in arms control. However, the prospect of a forthcoming agreement is doubtful. The Soviets want a new approach that calls for US and Soviet reductions outside the framework of MBFR as a show of good faith while working toward a formal agreement. Obviously designed to avoid the data base issue, the new Eastern approach would consist of a reduction of 13,000 US and 20,000 Soviet troops in the form of units and their armaments within 1 year, plus a political commitment not to increase forces or armaments in the reduction area. Only then would the Soviets undertake a formal MBFR agreement to reduce manpower on both sides to the common ceiling of 900,000. The fundamental problem with the East's approach is

that it avoids the data base issue and leaves the eventual size of Eastern reductions undetermined.

Regarding verification, Mr. Morton Abramowitz, the current US ambassador to the MBFR negotiations, noted that although the East has acknowledged the importance of cooperative verification measures and now appears to accept many elements of the Western proposals, its position still falls short of Western requirements. The only verification measure offered by the East to monitor the actual reductions is a voluntary procedure that involves inviting observers to witness the reduction of the largest contingents. The other cooperative verification measures the East has proposed are designed to take place only after reductions have been made and the common ceilings reached.

But the real issue, as I see it, is not whether an MBFR agreement can be reached but rather, if it is, whether it will be in NATO's best interest. I don't think it will be; I believe NATO's ability to successfully fight a conventional war depends on the quality of its conventional weapons, not on the number of active combat troops the enemy has.

2.
NATO's Problem: Fighting a Conventional War

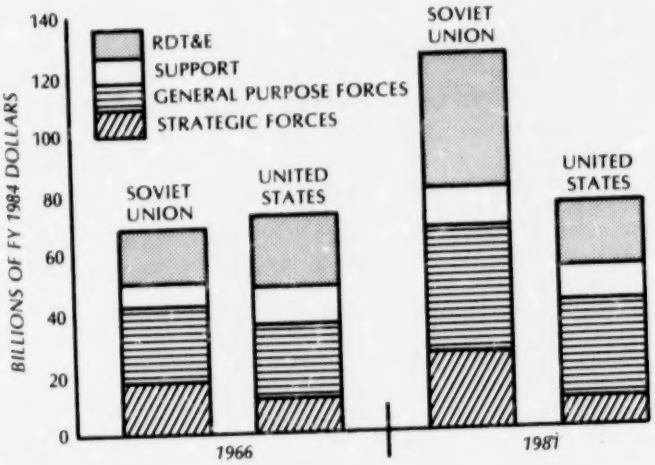
WHILE THE SOVIET UNION has been steadily building up its weapon arsenals over the past 20 years, the West has been steadily losing its global military advantage. The change in the balance of forces has allowed the Soviets to extend their influence to regions previously free from the threat of Soviet military power, while also increasing their power in traditional areas of confrontation. If the Soviets are allowed to continue unchecked, this shift in the balance of military forces could fatally weaken the Western Alliance and severely threaten the security of the United States. Although my pessimistic forecast might be open to disagreement, no serious

observer can dispute the widely documented evidence on the scope and size of the Soviet buildup. And nowhere is the shift in the balance of forces more evident than in the NATO–Warsaw Pact confrontation in Europe.

The new Warsaw Pact threat

A comparison of the money spent on defense by the United States and the Soviet Union since 1966 indicates what has happened to the balance of forces between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. Figure 1 shows that the total military investment of the two alliance leaders was about equal in 1966. Since that time, however, the Soviet Union has increased its investment by approximately $60 billion while the United States has increased its investment by only $10 billion. Figure 1 also shows that the Soviet investment in 1981 was about triple the US investment for strategic forces, about one-and-a-half times the US investment for general purpose forces, and about double the US investment for research and development expenditures.[1]

The striking difference between the military investment levels of the United States and the Soviet Union are even more evident when comparing production levels for various weapon systems. Table 2 illustrates levels of production from 1974 to 1982 for both the superpowers and their respective alliance partners; and although the information is based on the production of only major weapon systems and goes back only as far as there are firm production



- Mission area totals include outlays for procurement and military construction.
- RDT&E is for all mission areas.
- US investments for the Vietnam War are excluded.
- Soviet investment is an estimate of what it would cost the United States to duplicate investment activity.

Source: US Department of Defense, *Annual Report to the Congress, Fiscal Year 1984* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1983).

FIGURE 1
US and Soviet military investment by mission area

TABLE 2
Production of Selected Weapons, 1974–1982[a]

Weapon category	*Soviet Union*	*Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact*	*United States*	*Non-US NATO*	*Pact:NATO ratio*
Tanks	17,350	3,450	6,400	2,600	2.3:1
Other armored vehicles[b]	36,650	9,100	4,800	10,300	3.0:1
Artillery and rocket launchers	13,350	1,300	950	700	8.9:1
Tactical combat aircraft[c]	6,100	800	3,050	2,650	1.2:1
Intercontinental ballistic missiles	2,035	—	346	—	5.9:1
Major surface warships	85	10	72	79	0.6:1
Attack submarines	61	—	27	33	1.0:1
Ballistic missile submarines	33	—	2	3	6.6:1
Theater nuclear missiles[d]	5,850	—	3,550	1,450	1.2:1

[a]Totals represent that portion of a nation's production earmarked for its own military services plus imports, and excludes production for export.

[b]Includes light tanks; armored personnel carriers; infantry fighting vehicles; reconnaissance, fire support, and air defense vehicles.

[c]Includes fighter-attack, reconnaissance, electronic warfare, and all combat-capable tactical training aircraft.

[d]Includes ground- and sea-launched missiles, as well as intermediate- and medium-range ballistic missiles.

Source: US Department of Defense, *Annual Report to the Congress, Fiscal Year 1984* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 24.

data, I find the comparison very disturbing: 2,035 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) for the Warsaw Pact versus 346 for NATO, nearly 67,000 tanks and other armored vehicles for the Pact versus 24,000 for NATO, 6,900 Pact tactical aircraft versus 5,700 for NATO. The data in this figure show that the Warsaw Pact outproduced the West in every category of major weapon system except general purpose naval warships (of which NATO produced 211 surface combatants and submarines to 156 for the Pact).[2]

These production levels may appear startling enough, but their full impact can be better appreciated by reviewing their cumulative effect on the static balance of forces. In strategic nuclear forces, the massive Soviet buildup of ICBMs has virtually eliminated the superiority the West once enjoyed in this area. Table 3 summarizes the US-Soviet strategic balance as of 1983. As a simple illustration of the balance, the table seems to show that the West still holds an edge because of its greater number of warheads and bombs. But static measures alone do not reflect important differences in the composition of the Western and Eastern forces. In terms of equivalent megatonnage, or the measure of the destructive power of bombs and warheads, the Soviets hold a decided advantage over the West—6,100 versus 3,750 megatons. Another hidden difference lies in the West's greater dependence on sea-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) warheads versus the Soviet reliance on ICBMs.[3] But regardless of which side has the edge in strategic nuclear capability for particular strategic systems, the Soviets have eliminated the

TABLE 3
The Strategic Balance, 1983

Weapons system	*United States*		*Soviet Union*	
Intercontinental ballistic missiles	1,045		1,998	
Warheads		2,145		5,654
Sea-launched ballistic missiles	568		980	
Warheads		5,152		2,688
Bombers	328		143	
Weapons		2,348		300
Total delivery vehicles	1,941		2,521	
Total warheads and bombs		9,645		8,642

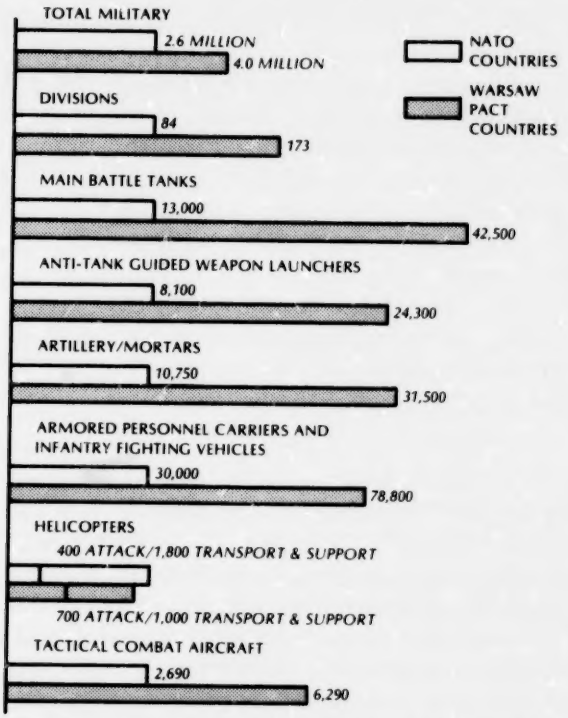
Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1983–1984* (London: IISS, 1983), pp. 3–11, 120–121. Data on Soviet bomber weapons taken from IISS, *The Military Balance, 1982–1983.*

large strategic nuclear superiority the Western Allies used to enjoy.

The effect that Soviet production of nonstrategic nuclear forces has had on the balance of forces is even more alarming. In the early 1970s, NATO enjoyed a nearly absolute advantage in theater nuclear weapons. According to the Joint Chiefs

of Staff 1984 report on military posture, however, over the last 10 years the Soviets have closed the gap and now enjoy a numerical advantage. They have introduced several new theater nuclear systems, including self-propelled guns; three short range tactical missiles; and the SS-20, a longer-range nuclear missile capable of carrying three warheads. NATO has deployed no comparable weapons during the same period. Even though NATO is now deploying a longer-range force composed of US Pershing II missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles, the numerical balance of non-strategic nuclear forces will continue to favor the Soviets.[4]

The third (and most important for this discussion) static measure of the balance of forces involves conventional forces. Throughout NATO's three decades of existence, the Warsaw Pact has always held a numerical advantage in most categories of conventional weapons. NATO, because it had superior nuclear weapons and most of its conventional systems were considered to be of superior quality, often dismissed the possible significance of this Warsaw Pact advantage. But NATO no longer enjoys the protective cover of a superior nuclear force, and the massive modernization effort the Soviets started in the early 1970s has dramatically increased both the quantity and quality of Warsaw Pact conventional forces. Figure 2 shows the Warsaw Pact's numerical advantage in conventional force levels, an advantage that continues to grow with the introduction of new tanks, self-propelled artillery, armored infantry vehicles, and modern air defense systems.[5]



- Warsaw Pact Divisions normally consist of fewer personnel than NATO Divisions but contain more tanks and artillery, thereby obtaining similar combat power.
- Figures indicate forces in place in NATO Europe and, for Warsaw Pact forces, as far east as but excluding the three Western Military Districts in western Russia (Moscow, Volga, and Ural Military Districts).

Source: US Department of Defense, *Soviet Military Power 1983* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1983).

FIGURE 2
NATO and Warsaw Pact forces in place in Europe, 1981

The quantitative differences in force levels shown in figure 2, however, do not reveal other changes in force structure that have significantly enhanced Soviet–Warsaw Pact capabilities. Take, for example, numbers of helicopters. Although the illustration shows an overall numerical advantage in favor of NATO, the Soviets have almost a two to one advantage—700 to 400—in attack helicopters. Other areas of improvement and modernization that are not readily apparent include unconventional and radio electronic warfare capabilities. The Soviets have also brought back the World War II mobile group concept in the form of Operational Maneuver Groups, or OMGs. These self-sustaining, tank-heavy raiding forces have been developed for conventional offensive operations. OMGs are expected to penetrate quickly to the enemy rear areas, independent of the main body of forces, to secure terrain and disrupt NATO's efforts to reinforce its forces.

But the shift in mission emphasis concerning tactical combat aircraft is perhaps the most ominous story of all. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Soviet tactical air forces were primarily designed and structured to defend airspace over Warsaw Pact territory. Since that time, according to a 1977 congressional report, those forces have been fundamentally structured as a powerful offensive force capable of conducting air superiority, close air support, and deep interdiction missions. This change in mission orientation has shifted the potential air war westward and has deprived NATO air forces, to a degree, of their

traditional role as the great "equalizer" against the strength of Warsaw Pact ground forces.[6]

The Soviets' buildup and changes in their conventional force structure have created another serious challenge. Soviet–Warsaw Pact forces deployed in Eastern Europe now appear to possess the ability to launch a massive conventional attack in central Europe with little or no warning. On the other hand, NATO's ability to conduct a successful forward defense of Western Europe has always depended and continues to depend on its ability to reinforce and reposition its forces deployed on the continent. NATO reinforcements consist primarily of US air and ground forces that have been made available for NATO missions, and repositioning involves moving forces already located in Europe to their assigned wartime positions. In contrast, reinforcement for the Warsaw Pact would have already taken place in the form of a peacetime military buildup. The result, as expressed as early as 1979 by then Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, General Alexander Haig, is that the Warsaw Pact now possesses "a forward posture which would permit them to launch an attack without the kind of reinforcements from Soviet-based second echelon forces we have traditionally relied on for . . . warning."[7]

Effects on NATO's strategy

As the Soviet–Warsaw Pact strength has increased over the years, so has Western concern over NATO's ability to meet the threat. NATO's military strategy of flexible response, which serves as the

basis for planning and structuring NATO forces, has been the focal point of that concern.

The development of NATO's defense strategy began in 1950 at the outbreak of the Korean War. Soviet involvement in Korea marked a new stage of increasing aggressiveness in Soviet policy, and it prompted the NATO Allies to develop defense plans that called for large increases in conventional forces to defend the forward line. At about the same time, according to Wynfred Joshua in *Nuclear Weapons and the Atlantic Alliance*, a new strategic concept began to emerge in British and American thinking which stressed the superiority of strategic airpower and postulated that the threat of massive nuclear destruction to the enemy's homeland would sufficiently deter a Soviet attack. The strategists also believed that the superior firepower of nuclear weapons offered the possibility of reducing conventional force levels and the overall cost of the defense budget. Joshua goes on to say that this thinking led NATO to abandon its goal of improving its conventional forces and gradually accept a "tripwire" strategy which threatened the Soviets with a massive nuclear retaliatory strike if they invaded Western Europe.[8]

The credibility of the "tripwire" strategy, which was so clearly tied to the United States' superiority in nuclear weapons, was soon seriously challenged by Soviet progress in nuclear weapons technology. Prompted by the Soviet development of a credible strategic nuclear capability and uneasy about an all or nothing response, the United States in the early

1960s pushed for a change in Alliance strategy to offer a more flexible set of guidelines for using nuclear weapons. US decisionmakers and defense planners argued that intercontinental nuclear war should be fought only as a last resort and that more attention should be given to improving conventional forces. The Europeans, on the other hand, favored a rapid escalation to the strategic nuclear level to avoid a continent-destroying tactical nuclear or large-scale conventional war. Only after a long debate, which involved sharing very sensitive information among the Allies and assessing the consequences of different nuclear options, did NATO finally agree in 1967 on a modified strategy of flexible response.[9]

The new strategy called for NATO to be prepared to challenge any level of aggression with equivalent conventional or nuclear force, and to increase the level of force, as necessary, to end the conflict. In essence, the strategy combined the views of the United States and the Europeans by acknowledging that a substantial conventional capability was essential to maintain a credible deterrent and by coupling the fate of the United States to its Allies through the possibility of nuclear escalation.

An integral part of NATO's flexible response strategy was the doctrine of forward defense: defense against a conventional attack must take place as far eastward or near the Iron Curtain as possible. The rationale for this doctrine was essentially political in that the Alliance was founded on the concept of collective defense and equal security for all of its members. For West Germany, with 30 percent of

its population and 25 percent of its industry lying within 150 kilometers of the East German–Czechoslovakian border, security required halting a Warsaw Pact attack as close to the border as possible.[10] Thus, flexible response demanded that NATO be versatile enough to cope with aggression at the most appropriate level on the conflict scale and to escalate quickly if necessary.

NATO's reliance on the strategy of flexible response remains firm, but the dramatic shift in the balance of forces over the last 15–20 years has strained and continues to strain the strategy's credibility. The fundamental requirement of the strategy is that NATO possess a credible capability with its strategic nuclear, theater nuclear, and conventional forces. In other words, NATO's forces at each level of confrontation must be able to deter and, if necessary, defeat Soviet forces. The fundamental problems over the years have been NATO's failure to keep pace with the growing threat and its overreliance on the nuclear response.

Fortunately, the United States and its NATO partners have undertaken a series of force improvements designed to help revitalize and modernize at least two-thirds of the flexible response triad. At the strategic nuclear level, the United States and the United Kingdom have taken independent steps to ensure the credibility and effectiveness of their forces for the long term. The United States' strategic modernization plan is extensive and includes improvements in all 3 legs of the strategic triad—bomber (B-1), ICBM (MX), and SLBM (Trident II)

forces. The United Kingdom's modernization plan involves replacing its aging Polaris SLBM fleet with Trident submarines and missiles.[11] At the theater nuclear level, NATO decided to modernize its intermediate-range nuclear force (INF) with 572 new longer-range INF missiles (464 ground-launched cruise missiles and 108 Pershing IIs). The deployment of all the missiles, however, was only to take place if arms control negotiations could not produce an accord eliminating their need or warranting a lower level of deployment. To date no arms control agreement has been reached and deployment of the missiles began on schedule in December 1983.

Unfortunately, NATO's less-than-adequate nonnuclear or conventional forces continue to weaken the flexible response strategy. Without a conventional defense capable of defeating a conventional Warsaw Pact attack, NATO will likely be forced to use nuclear weapons to stay in the fight. This might not be so bad if NATO could control the level and intensity of the escalation. However, as I discussed earlier, the Soviets have developed a comparable and in some cases superior nuclear capability that they would surely use in response to NATO use, if not before. And once nuclear weapons are used, we can only speculate about where the conflict will end. Most people believe the use of any nuclear weapon in a confrontation involving the superpowers will lead to an intercontinental nuclear exchange.

NATO is aware that its conventional forces need to be improved to reduce the Alliance's reliance on nuclear weapons. Over the last 6 or 7 years, the

United States and its NATO Allies have initiated various force improvement programs and made commitments to do more. These initiatives include the following:

- The 1977 Ministerial Guidance, later ratified at the 1978 summit meeting of heads of state in Washington, sets real increases "in the region of 3 percent" in defense spending as a goal for the Alliance partners.

- The Master Restationing Plan is a US Army plan designed to improve the warfighting capability of three forward-deployed brigades by relocating them closer to the inter-German border.

- The Long Term Defense Program, also endorsed at the 1978 Washington summit, implements over 123 separate force improvement measures, divided into nine functional areas related to conventional defense and one area related to tactical nuclear forces. Although the program does not specifically call for additions to force structure, it does provide a blueprint for cooperative steps in certain high-priority areas such as readiness, reinforcement, reserve mobilization, maritime posture, air defense, communications, electronic warfare, logistics, and weapons standardization.

- NATO heads of state and government, at a summit meeting in Bonn, West Germany, on

10 June 1982, agreed to a mandate for strengthening NATO's defense posture, with special regard to conventional forces. They said NATO should explore ways to take full advantage of emerging technologies, both technically and emotionally, to improve conventional defense.

- The NATO force goals for 1983–1988 emphasize conventional force improvements, including replacement and modernization of equipment, some increases in maritime force levels, attainment of adequate stock levels, and improvements in manning levels and training.[12]

Although parts of these programs have been implemented, doubt remains whether NATO has the resolve to adequately improve its conventional forces. In a statement to the House Armed Services Committee on 10 March 1983, General Bernard A. Rogers, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, stated the following concern about the situation:

> By nations' continued failure to meet fully their commitments to improve conventional forces, we have mortgaged our defense to the nuclear response. Instead of possessing genuine flexibility, NATO's current military posture will require us—if attacked conventionally—to escalate fairly quickly to the second response of our strategy, "deterrence escalation" to nuclear weapons.[13]

General Rogers went on to say that although he thought the military situation was unfavorable, he did not believe it was unmanageable nor beyond restoration if the NATO partners resolved to act before it was too late. He believed the necessary conventional capability could generally be achieved if the Alliance members would fulfill their NATO force goals for 1983–1988, which emphasize conventional force improvements.

The recently completed European Security Study, conducted by several Americans and Europeans with experience in government, drew similar conclusions about NATO's military and defense posture. This study examined how NATO might improve its conventional capacity and lessen its dependence on the early use of nuclear weapons. It concluded that NATO's objectives are gravely threatened by the serious imbalance between NATO and Warsaw Pact conventional military forces and that NATO should move promptly to upgrade its conventional capability and "raise the nuclear threshold."[14]

Effects on arms control

The buildup and modernization of Soviet–Warsaw Pact forces has put pressure on the United States and its European Allies to do the same to maintain the credibility of NATO's defense strategy. But force modernization is expensive; and in free economies where there are many other priorities competing with defense spending for limited funds, commitments to pay for force improvements are not

always kept. Even if they were, modernization is not an end in itself. Improvements on one side usually lead to counter-improvements on the other side. If left unchecked, the result is a spiraling arms race.

The prospect of an uncontrolled arms race has caused the West to intensify its efforts to control, limit, and eventually reduce forces on both sides through various arms control initiatives—the primary objective being to guarantee security and stability at the lowest possible force levels. Although there have been other Western arms control proposals over the last 10 to 15 years, there are three that most directly concern the NATO–Warsaw Pact confrontation of strategic nuclear, theater nuclear, and conventional forces. A summary of each follows.

Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START). The negotiations to limit US and Soviet strategic nuclear forces began in 1969, known as the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I and II). The first real breakthrough came in 1972 at the conclusion of SALT I: a 5-year interim agreement on offensive strategic arms that set limits on launchers—ICBM silos and submarine tubes for SLBMs—and an antiballistic missile (ABM) treaty limiting ABM systems. Many of the more difficult questions were deferred to the follow-on SALT II negotiations, which culminated in an agreement in 1979, after 7 years of negotiation. This treaty placed restrictions on weapons modernization, placed a ceiling on the number of warheads that could be carried by each type of ICBM, and limited each side to the number of "heavy" missiles it had at the time.[15] But there was general disappoint-

ment over the fact that the SALT II agreement failed to achieve actual arms reductions. The ensuing debate over the merits of the agreement was cut short, however, when the Carter administration halted the ratification process indefinitely in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

The Reagan administration, when it took office in January 1981, reviewed previous security and arms control policies and concluded that, because of SALT II's inadequacies, the administration would not seek ratification. The president instead decided to tackle the problem of significantly reducing the existing strategic forces. The United States subsequently proposed Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) with the Soviet Union. The START negotiations sought to reduce the number of ICBMs and SLBMs and their warheads, and to cut substantially the most destabilizing categories of ballistic missile systems.[16]

It is not within the scope of this paper to fully discuss US and Soviet proposals. I would like to mention, however, that the Soviets wanted to proceed with START negotiations using the unratified SALT II agreement as a basis. The Soviets went so far as to propose that, as soon as the talks would begin, all US and Soviet strategic arms should be frozen quantitatively and their modernization limited as much as possible. I believe these proposals clearly indicate the Soviets' satisfaction with the status quo in the balance of strategic nuclear systems.

Unfortunately, START negotiations have been suspended indefinitely because of a Soviet walkout in 1983. The Soviets' departure from the negotiations is a result of the NATO decision to carry through with its 1979 "dual track" decision to modernize its intermediate-range nuclear force and begin deployment of 572 longer-range US Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) in Western Europe.

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force (INF) Negotiations. In the latter half of the 1970s, NATO became increasingly concerned over the growing number of Soviet INF systems in Europe, particularly the longer-range SS-4 and SS-5 and the newer, highly accurate SS-20. To maintain the credibility of their flexible response strategy, the NATO Allies unanimously agreed in 1979 that the United States should deploy new longer-range Pershing II missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles to counter the Soviet threat. In what was known as the "dual track" decision, NATO also proposed that the United States would simultaneously seek arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union in an attempt to limit intermediate-range nuclear forces.[17]

INF negotiations started in Geneva in November 1981. These negotiations centered on the systems of greatest concern to both sides—the land-based, longer-range INF (LRINF) missiles, namely the Soviet SS-4, SS-5, and SS-20, and the US Pershing II and GLCM. The United States proposed to eliminate the entire class of US and Soviet longer-range missiles—the so-called zero/zero solution—or,

if the Soviets were not prepared to totally eliminate these systems, to agree to substantial reductions resulting in equal levels of LRINF system warheads.

The Soviets, in contrast, responded by calling for a moratorium on so-called medium-range nuclear missiles and aircraft in Europe, and for the NATO nuclear nations—the United States, the United Kingdom, and France—and the Soviet Union each to reduce to 300 medium-range missiles and aircraft either in or "intended for use" in Europe. The Soviet proposal, in essence, would permit them to retain a substantial number of SS-20s in the European USSR and would prohibit deployment of the Pershing IIs and GLCMs in Europe.

At this writing, INF negotiations have also been suspended. The Soviet delegation walked out as they did from the START negotiations because NATO began deploying Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles.

Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) Negotiations. As discussed earlier, since 1973 NATO and the Warsaw Pact have been engaged in negotiations aimed at reducing conventional force levels in Central Europe. The main focus has been manpower reductions—to a level of 700,000 ground troops and a combined maximum of 900,000 air force and ground troops in an "area of reductions." This reduction area consists of West Germany and the Benelux countries on the Western side, and East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia on the Eastern side. In addition to manpower reductions, the

West seeks certain "associated measures" that would enhance stability and help verify negotiated reductions.[18]

Although there are several unresolved issues, the one that has probably precluded any sort of agreement to date is the East-West disagreement over the number of Eastern troops currently stationed in the reduction area. The West estimates that there are approximately 170,000 more troops in the reduction area than the East acknowledges. Without an agreed data base from which to begin, the West feels that reductions to specified levels are meaningless. To many Western observers, the Eastern figures appear to be designed to prove the East's contention that approximate parity already exists in Central Europe.

All of these negotiations, however, have produced very little progress toward controlling the new Soviet threat. Only a very limited agreement on strategic arms has been concluded, and the outlook for a negotiated settlement in the near future from any of the arms control initiatives is not encouraging. As disappointing as this lack of progress in arms control has been, it has reinforced a fundamental reality of the arms control process: arms control must never be used as a crutch to hold up inadequate military capabilities in the hope that deficiencies and force imbalances can be negotiated away. Negotiating doesn't guarantee that an agreement will be reached, and an agreement doesn't guarantee that all negotiating objectives will be achieved. On the contrary, unless objectives are limited, success is very doubtful, particularly if negotiating from a position of relative inferiority. The problem is that

the side with the military advantage has no real incentive to reduce that advantage; even when faced with the threat of an arms race, that side can probably choose to maintain its advantage.

Similarly, if those with the military advantage do agree to sit down and negotiate, they are figuratively in the driver's seat. They can appear to negotiate in good faith but in fact only stall and manipulate the situation to further their advantage. In essence, they have nothing to lose and everything to gain—at worst, they will delay a potential arms race; at best, they may be able to reach an agreement that codifies their military advantage. This analysis assumes, of course, that the militarily powerful side has no sincere interest in stability and peace.

My point is that arms control cannot be used as a substitute for an investment in adequate defense and deterrent capabilities. As stated in the fourth principle of the Reagan administration's approach to arms control, "arms control is not an end in itself but rather a complement to adequate defenses as an important means of underwriting peace and international stability."[19]

Having said all that, I am confident that the steps the United States and its NATO Allies are taking to improve their strategic and intermediate-range nuclear forces will be carried out and are adequate to meet the Alliance's defensive needs. These force posture improvements should, in turn, provide a sound position from which meaningful arms control negotiations can resume, leading to accords that will reduce the levels of forces needed to guarantee security on both sides.

The conventional force outlook, however, is very disturbing. NATO's conventional forces are inferior and the prospects for adequate force improvements are uncertain. NATO remains in a precarious and vulnerable position. Because NATO's track record in fulfilling commitments for conventional improvements is so bad and the future so uncertain, many analysts would argue that some form of arms control is the only realistic alternative.

The answer, or at least part of the answer, to eliminating NATO's conventional deficiencies vis-à-vis the Warsaw Pact may in fact be arms control. I argue, however, that the current conventional arms control forum, the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Negotiations, is not contributing toward the goal of stability and should therefore be discontinued. My fundamental concern is that NATO is trying to negotiate away an Eastern advantage the Soviets will never give up. More concrete, however, are my concerns over the following:

- The manpower disparity between Eastern and Western forces in Central Europe is not the destabilizing element in conventional forces; the focus in MBFR negotiations, therefore, is the wrong focus for conventional arms control negotiations.

- Manpower reductions proposed in MBFR will adversely affect NATO force readiness and impede modernization efforts.

3.
Will Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions Solve NATO's Problem?

AN AGREEMENT PRODUCED BY THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS will increase military stability and benefit NATO only if it effectively addresses the problem discussed in chapter 2: the imbalance of NATO and Warsaw Pact conventional forces in Central Europe. In chapter 1, I presented the negotiating positions and proposals of both sides in MBFR. Now I will examine the proposals against the present situation in Central Europe to see whether or not an MBFR agreement would increase stability in the East-West confrontation.

Focus on manpower

As I said earlier, I don't believe MBFR is in NATO's best interest because it will do little to

increase military stability in Central Europe. The primary reason is that manpower, the main focus of the negotiations, is not the source of instability. The primary source of instability is the large disparity in conventional armaments and the capability and options that this disparity gives the Warsaw Pact. As Phillip Karber argues in "How to Lose an Arms Race," success in the mechanized war we expect to fight in Europe depends more on the technological capability of weapons and their effective, coordinated use than on the number of troops.[1]

The importance of armaments over manpower is not a new thesis. In a report on the Soviet–Warsaw Pact threat prepared for the Senate Armed Services Committee in January 1977, Senators Sam Nunn and Dewey Bartlett stated the following with regard to armament versus manpower implications for MBFR:

> In our view, the manpower disparities between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in the designated reduction area are not the major NATO problem. Of great concern, however, is the Pact's superiority in firepower, greater readiness, and unsurpassed mobility. These are the true pillars of success in modern war, as was dramatically demonstrated in the October War of 1973. In our opinion the main objectives of MBFR should be to reduce Soviet firepower in the Guidelines Area, to provide the necessary verification means to insure it is not reintroduced, and to take steps which would improve early warning of impending attacks.[2]

Another problem in using manpower as the focal point of negotiations is that it does little to correct the imbalance in conventional forces. Figure 2 showed that the ratio of Warsaw Pact to NATO manpower in place in Europe is approximately 1.5 to 1—in contrast to the almost 3 to 1 ratio in the total quantity of conventional weaponry. Thus, with the exception of helicopters, the relative force ratio is substantially more unbalanced than the combined manpower ratio. This illustration alone indicates that manpower should be the least preferred object of control and reduction instead of the most favored.

The quantitative changes in NATO and Warsaw Pact weaponry and troop strength between 1965 and 1980 give further evidence of the importance both alliances place on weaponry. Since 1965, over 30,000 conventional weapons have been added to operational combat units by both sides—an armament increase of almost 50 percent. Combined manpower has increased by less than 10 percent. NATO has gained approximately 5,500 weapons, a 22 percent increase, but its troop total has decreased by 3 percent. The Warsaw Pact has gained over 24,000 weapons, or an armament increase of approximately 64 percent, while its total number of troops has increased 15 percent. Both sides clearly emphasize conventional armament over manpower.[3]

Recent history could support an argument that the present manpower ratios in Central Europe are operationally insignificant. Karber argues, for example, that if sheer numbers of troops were the principal factor in effective military power, the French

would have stopped Hitler in 1940; the Israelis would have been driven into the sea in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973; United Nations forces would have been destroyed in Korea in 1951; and the United States and South Vietnam would have crushed the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese armies in the 1960s. Thus, the outcome of war has been dictated less by the relative numbers of troops at the disposal of warring nations, and more by the manner in which troops are armed, organized, trained, and employed on the battlefield. Short of large differences in the ratio of opposing forces, quality has determined victory or defeat in military battles.[4]

In addition to being a relatively poor measure of combat power, manpower levels are very hard to verify. Unlike major conventional armaments, manpower is not readily observed by national technical means. As an example of the difficulty in detecting movements of manpower, emplacement of a full Soviet motorized rifle brigade in Cuba went undiscovered by the United States for almost 2 years.[5] The Soviets' method of biannually rotating troops between the USSR and East Germany compounds NATO's verification problem. The rotating troops used to move by rail and the rotation took several weeks to complete, presenting little difficulty for Western intelligence gatherers. But since the early 1970s, the troops have moved by air and the rotation takes only days. Verification of the exchange of troops began to take much longer than did the rotation itself. And intelligence gatherers had difficulty determining whether aircraft returning to the USSR actually carried replaced personnel.[6]

The debate over negotiating armaments rather than manpower will likely continue over the years, but there is little chance that the focus of MBFR will ever shift away from manpower. Negotiators on the Western side feel that manpower negotiations are so far along that it would be wise to conclude an agreement on manpower and deal with armaments later. Other reasons for not shifting the MBFR focus to armaments, such as the difficulty of establishing an equipment data base and an equitable and effective mode of comparison, have also been mentioned.[7]

Having argued that the real source of military instability in the Central Region is the disparity in armaments rather than manpower, and realizing that trying to shift the focus of MBFR from manpower to armaments at this stage of negotiations is unrealistic, I believe another question remains: What will mutual manpower reductions do to the balance of East-West forces in Central Europe? Or more specifically, how well suited will NATO be to execute its forward defense strategy at reduced manpower levels?

Impact on force structure

I had hoped to start my discussion of what the proposed manpower reductions would do to the balance of forces in Central Europe with a general summary of the most recent US-NATO impact study on the subject. To my disbelief, I found no evidence that such a study has ever been done. Based on the information I *have* found, NATO actually needs

more trained and ready manpower to execute its strategy and keep it viable, not less.

General Bernard A. Rogers, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, testified before Congress in 1983 that NATO's current military posture would require the Alliance—if attacked conventionally—to escalate fairly quickly to nuclear weapons to defend Western Europe. He added that the primary reason for NATO's conventional force weakness was that the Alliance partners had collectively failed to meet their commitments to improve NATO's conventional forces.[8]

General Rogers did not, however, consider the conventional military situation unmanageable or beyond restoration if the Alliance resolved to act before it is too late. He felt that there was no need to try to match the Warsaw Pact one for one in any area of force comparison because NATO is a defensive alliance. Rather, the solution was to develop an adequate conventional capability, which would provide a reasonable prospect of successful defense. To achieve this conventional capability, General Rogers felt that the first priority was to do more to improve the readiness and sustainability of the forces available. He defined this effort as manning, equipping, training, maintaining, sustaining, and reinforcing to peacetime standards. He also emphasized modernization and estimated that an adequate conventional capability could be achieved by the end of the decade—if the NATO nations fulfill their agreed NATO Force Goals on the timetable established. In monetary terms, the Supreme Headquarters for

Allied Powers, Europe, translated meeting these force goals into a requirement for an annual average of 4 percent real increase in defense spending by each nation.[9]

Improving readiness has several implications when it comes to manpower. The first implication concerns providing adequate combat troop strength to execute NATO's strategy of forward defense. As I discussed earlier, the strategy of forward defense is designed to meet the attacking forces at the border and give up little if any ground. That's why NATO has stationed the majority of its forces along the inter-German and Czech-German border, as illustrated in figure 3. This front is over 700 kilometers long, stretching NATO forces thin to cover the border. Because few reserve formations are available in NATO, there is little defense in depth, which makes defending against a concentrated attack at any particular point very difficult. This lack of depth forces NATO to rely heavily on rapid US reinforcement to contain or counter any Warsaw Pact breakthrough.

The point to understand here is that because NATO defenses are stretched thin, there is little if any latitude for adjustments in the present NATO force levels. Although the Warsaw Pact might reduce its manpower proportionally to a common ceiling under an MBFR agreement, the burden of forward defense placed on the manpower available to NATO today is too demanding for the Alliance to give up 10–20 percent of its active force. Furthermore, as Steven Canby has pointed out, the reductions will have a less adverse effect on the Warsaw

Source: Adapted from Richard Lawrence and Jeffrey Record, *U.S. Force Structure in NATO* (Washington: Brookings Institute, 1974); and from US Army materials.

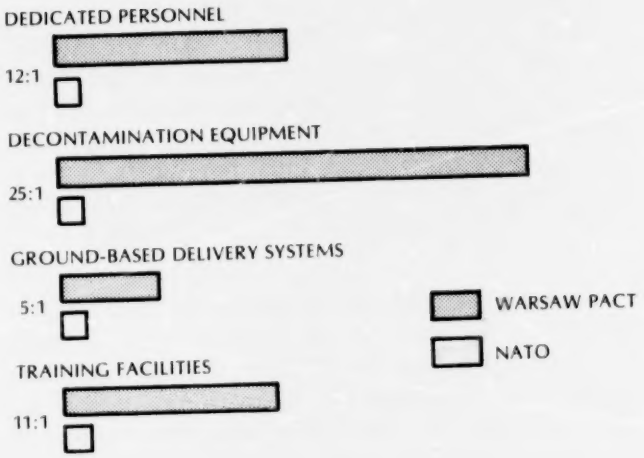
FIGURE 3
Military sectors in NATO's Central Region

Pact than on NATO. Militarily, a 700,000-man common ceiling translates into a 27 percent reduction for the East (73 percent of 962,000 equals 700,000), reducing Warsaw Pact divisions from approximately 58 to roughly 44. The Pact could still deploy its combat forces both laterally and in echelon, particularly since approximately 25 more Soviet divisions would be available to reinforce the front. The use of these large reserves and deceptive screening could easily mask penetrating thrusts against NATO's relatively thin defense. Thus, the Pact could launch armored attacks at several points along the front with a minimum of its actual force strength, while the majority of its forces could be concentrated in reserves and echeloned in depth for very large armor blitzkrieg thrusts at selected points on the NATO defensive line.[10]

Providing adequate support and training for NATO forces also has critical manpower implications. General Rogers stated in March 1983 that the United States had severe shortages in deployed support forces for its ground units.[11] Although a proper balance of combat support to combat personnel is desired, US military planners have been forced to sacrifice certain logistics support functions in order to keep the necessary combat forces in place. Fortunately, this problem has been partially resolved through programs like Host Nation Support, under which, as in the case of NATO forces in West Germany, the host nation agrees to provide manpower for shortages in critical combat support areas.

New support and training requirements continue to increase and affect manpower needs of all the NATO Allies. For example, the chemical threat that now exists has created requirements for special units capable of dealing with chemical detection and decontamination. Figure 4 shows that NATO currently has a very limited capability to deal with this threat; therefore, more specially trained manpower is needed. To equip and modernize its conventional forces, NATO is fielding several new systems that will improve its ability to meet the Soviet threat. These systems include the M–1 and Leopard II tanks, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, the AH–64 attack helicopter, the F–16, and the Multirole Combat Aircraft (Toronado). These new third- and fourth-generation combat systems will replace older systems already in the field. Although the new technological systems generally result in increased combat capability and reduced manpower requirements in combat units, technology and firepower often require increased logistics support, such as maintenance, ammunition support, and petroleum distribution.

Furthermore, there are several new systems being introduced into the theater that are not replacement items; they are additions to the force structure that require additional manning. These systems include the Ground-Launched Cruise Missile (GLCM), the TR–1—an improved reconnaissance aircraft capable of all-weather reconnaissance and timely target acquisition—NATO AWACS, the Tactical Fusion Center, and the Multiple Launch Rocket system (MLRS).[12]



Source: US Department of Defense, Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *United States Military Posture, Fiscal Year 1985* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1984).

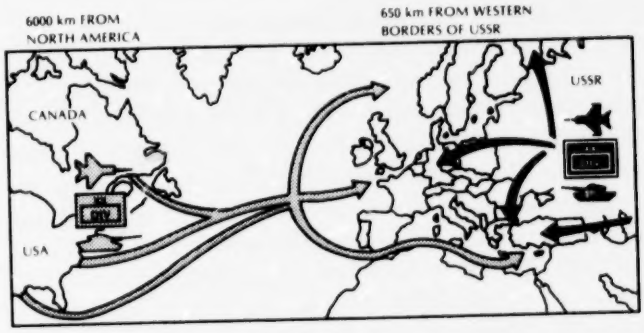
FIGURE 4
Comparison of chemical warfare resources, Warsaw Pact: NATO ratio (as of 1 January 1984)

NATO's lack of defense in depth and compelling reliance on US reinforcements raises one of the most glaring readiness problems facing the Alliance and, by implication, the biggest disparity in the cur-

rent MBFR reduction proposals. Because the western military districts of the Soviet Union are not included in the area of reductions, the Soviets would need to move forces no more than 600–700 kilometers from the inter-German border. The United States, on the other hand, must remove its forces to the Continental United States, a distance of approximately 6,000 kilometers.

The problem of reinforcement, as illustrated in figure 5, is obvious and has been obvious throughout the negotiations. In an effort to compensate for this geographic disparity, Western negotiators insisted through 1979 that Soviet reductions include all arms and equipment along with troops to help equalize the time it would take to bring forces back. The West felt that if the arms and equipment of withdrawn American troops remained prepositioned in Central Europe, a rapid rebuilding of NATO military strength was possible. US personnel could be quickly moved by air, whereas the need to move substantial quantities of heavy military equipment would slow down the Soviet reinforcement.

In theory, requiring the Soviets to withdraw equipment and arms with their troops to compensate for the much longer distance the United States has to withdraw its troops seems practical. This compensation assumes, of course, that the United States can bring these troops back in about the same time it will take the Soviets to return both their men and their equipment to the front. Unfortunately when this compensatory proposal was made, the



Source: US Department of Defense, Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *United States Military Posture, Fiscal Year 1985* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1984).

FIGURE 5
NATO and Warsaw Pact reinforcement of Central Europe

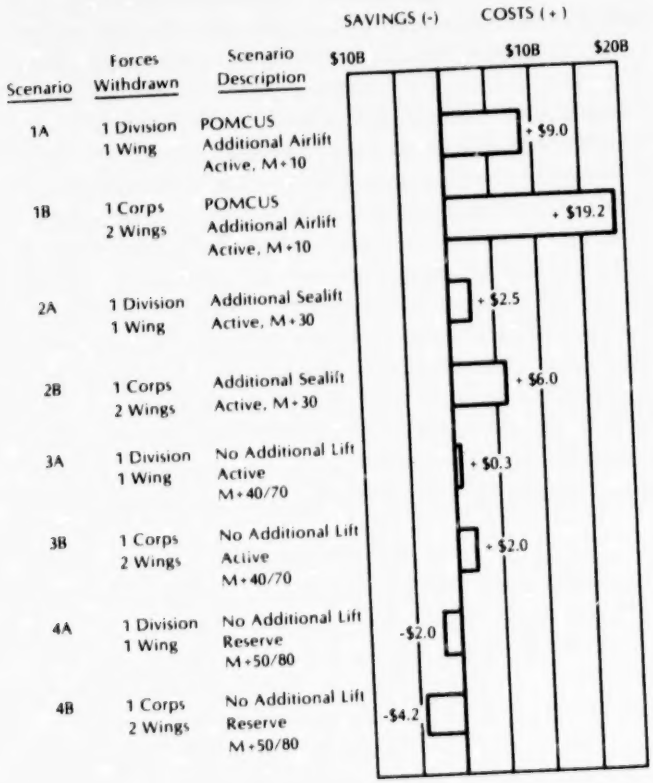
United States knew little about its real capabilities to reinforce Western Europe.[13]

Current US goals are to have 10 divisions and 60 tactical fighter squadrons in place in Europe 10 days after mobilization begins. Airlift deficiencies, however, severely limit the United States' capability to meet this goal. To put the projected worldwide airlift shortfall in perspective, current US defense planning has an objective of building an airlift force capable of carrying 66 million ton-miles per day. The current capability is less than half of that and forces are not programed to reach the objective until the late 1990s.[14]

A related factor associated with readiness and reducing forward-deployed US troops in Europe, though some aspects of it are often overlooked, is cost. In addition to providing maximum readiness, these forward-deployed troops are, in fact, a cost-effective way of meeting NATO's collective security requirements. Figure 6 shows that scenarios calling for rapid return of previously withdrawn forces in an emergency would require substantial net increases in Total Obligational Authority during FY 1984–88. The scenarios in which withdrawn troops remained on active duty and returned to Europe within M+10 (10 days after mobilization) were particularly expensive because of the additional airlift needed to support the troops' early return.[15]

Another issue that could have serious readiness implications is the disposition of forces after reduction. The East and West have agreed that any foreign forces, such as American and Soviet forces, stationed in the reduction area would be required to return to their home territory. Indigenous forces (West German, Dutch, Belgian, East German, Polish, and Czech), on the other hand, must be removed from their respective standing armies and transferred to the reserves. The problem is that NATO is probably much more dependent on its *collective* military capabilities than is the Warsaw Pact.

Although there is no question about the reliability of the Western Allies to fight together in the event of war in Europe, there is considerable doubt about the reliability of the Eastern European coun-



Source: US Department of Defense, *Annual Report to the Congress, Fiscal Year 1984* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1983.)

FIGURE 6
Summary of 5-year (1984–88) savings & costs of force withdrawals from Europe (in billions of dollars)

tries in supporting a Soviet-inspired confrontation with Western Europe. If the Warsaw Pact is stalemated or turned back in such a confrontation, disaffection is likely to appear among the Soviets' Warsaw Pact allies.[16] But the Soviet Union is near enough to the inter-German border to quickly place its own forces—more reliable and effective than Eastern European forces—at any point of confrontation. Conversely, the distance of the United States from Central Europe makes NATO dependent on Western European forces for its defense capability. The deactivation of European forces, therefore, could leave NATO unable to muster adequate forces quickly enough in a crisis, while it might benefit the Soviets by eliminating less effective, possibly unreliable forces within the Warsaw Pact, for which Soviet troops could substitute.

The argument that MBFR troop reductions would have an adverse impact on readiness and modernization would be incomplete without some reference to congressional ceilings on US troop strength in Europe. Congress has forced changes in force structure for Europe that are counterproductive to readiness and modernization. Further reductions under MBFR would only compound the problem. For example, in FY 1984 the number of US Army soldiers stationed in Europe was reduced by about 9,000 from FY 1983 to comply with a congressionally-imposed troop ceiling. This personnel reduction resulted in undermanning; and to preclude continued undermanning, the force structure in FY 1985 has been reduced to the level of the FY 1984 ceiling. Over these 2 years, high-priority modernization and

other force improvement programs have been initiated only by trading off the existing force structure—to include eliminating a combat brigade.[17]

These modifications come at a time when the US commitment to NATO is under intense scrutiny by both our Allies and our adversaries. Unless the United States shows complete resolve to make necessary force improvements, it will have difficulty getting its Allies to follow suit and, likewise, getting the Soviets to negotiate seriously. Therefore, reducing troop strength through an MBFR agreement would only worsen current and projected manpower shortages when NATO most needs its full manning to improve readiness and modernize.

4.
An Alternative to MBFR

I HAVE ARGUED THAT MUTUTAL REDUCTIONS in troop strength as proposed in the MBFR negotiations would not help stabilize the East-West military confrontation in Europe for two basic reasons: armaments, rather than troop levels, are the source of instability; and NATO, already facing manpower shortages, needs more, not fewer, troops in order to modernize and meet readiness goals. MBFR negotiations nonetheless continue. If an MBFR troop reduction accord would be so bad militarily for NATO, why does the Western Alliance continue to push for an agreement? One obvious reason is that many people still believe an MBFR accord will help stabilize the military situation in Central Europe. Several

other not-so-obvious factors, however, also are helping sustain interest in the talks.

What keeps MBFR going?

Five politically-oriented factors seem to be keeping the MBFR talks going. They are NATO's desire to ease political tensions in Europe, the United States' desire to hold the door open for further initiatives in nuclear arms control, NATO's desire to prevent the US Congress from unilaterally reducing US forces in Europe, the future demographic picture, and institutional inertia.

Political tension. The first factor is NATO's desire for some sort of arms control accord with the Soviet Union—a result of the deterioration in East-West relations over the past few years. Many events have contributed to this deterioration, including the installation of SS–20 missiles aimed at Western Europe, NATO's dual-track decision to modernize its theater nuclear forces with Pershing II missiles and GLCMs, and the Soviet-backed imposition of martial law in Poland. The Europeans, because of the impact these events could have on them, understandably have been the most zealous supporters of an arms control accord that would ease political tensions between the East and the West. Europeans' interest has also been fueled by the recent economic recession—a time marked by static or declining living standards, high levels of unemployment, and spiraling defense costs—which has increased the anxiety they feel about their future.

Arms control momentum. The cooling of East-West relations has also raised the level of concern in the United States. Americans are worried that a conflict starting in Europe will end in a strategic nuclear exchange between the superpowers. The United States, for this reason, has concentrated its arms control efforts on nuclear weapons and at the same time emphasized the need to increase NATO's conventional forces and lessen the risk of a conflict escalating to the nuclear level. American interest in MBFR has also increased because of the Soviet walkout from the nuclear treaty negotiations. MBFR is now the only active arms control negotiation, the only political forum in which to sustain any negotiating momentum with the Soviets.

Unilateral US force withdrawal. The factor that has probably had the greatest impact on sustaining interest in an MBFR agreement is the concern among many of the Western Allies that the United States might otherwise unilaterally withdraw its forward-deployed forces from Europe. Members of Congress who advocate unilateral withdrawal believe our European Allies aren't taking their defense seriously and aren't contributing their fair share to support the NATO Alliance. An MBFR agreement would provide an acceptable compromise: the United States would remain active in NATO but at a reduced level.

Demographic trend. A factor that has emerged recently as a significant influence on the need to reduce troop strength is the projected population trend. From now until the end of the century, the

population trend for both alliances shows a decline in the age groups that would make up the combat and combat support forces.[1] Of particular concern is the West German demographic situation. By 1999, the available manpower (under the existing system of conscription) in the Federal Republic of Germany is expected to fall by 50 percent, which would mean a potential reduction of approximately 250,000 troops. Although I don't doubt that the declining manpower base will create problems for NATO, I believe demographics is being used as a political excuse to conclude an MBFR manpower reduction. There are ways to maintain necessary troop levels despite the demographic changes. To use West Germany as an example, it could change its military system to increase the number of short-term volunteers and at the same time extend their term of enlistment. The FRG could also extend the term of conscripted service and increase the role of women in its armed forces.

Institutional inertia. The last factor that has helped sustain MBFR is institutional inertia. By inertia I mean the tendency of an object, once set in motion, to remain in motion unless affected by an external force. Negotiations have been going on for over 10 years, and although little has been achieved, a considerable amount of effort has been made to get to where we are today. If the negotiations suddenly stopped, the intangible benefits of a continued dialogue and exchange of information would disappear; the theory is that, although MBFR may not be the answer, as long as we keep talking, nothing worse is likely to happen.

Despite the factors perpetuating the MBFR negotiations, I believe it's time for NATO to stop pursuing an agreement in that forum. I have stated three primary reasons why I believe the proposals made in MBFR will not help stabilize the military confrontation in Central Europe: the focus for maintaining stability in Central Europe should be on armaments, not manpower; NATO, to exercise its strategy of forward defense and to support and modernize its existing forces, needs more manpower than it currently has; and provisions for the withdrawal of foreign forces and disposition of national forces would give the Soviets a distinct military advantage. Because the Soviets had a military advantage when negotiations began, and have a greater advantage now, they have been able to manipulate the West throughout the negotiations, offering reduction proposals that would not reduce their advantage while continuing their weapons buildup.

NATO now finds itself relying to an unacceptable degree on the nuclear response. MBFR's role has been to lull people into believing the disparity in conventional forces could be negotiated away by convincing the Soviets that their advantage was destabilizing and unnecessary. Rather than making the unpopular decisions needed to keep pace with Soviet conventional force modernization, NATO has crouched under the nuclear umbrella and let the imbalance grow to nearly unmanageable proportions. The West's failure to take action and show resolve to improve its conventional forces only reduced the chances of concluding a meaningful arms

control agreement with the Soviets. As Secretary of Defense Weinberger summarizes,

> It is unrealistic to believe that the Soviet Union will ever agree to stability at lower levels of arms, unless its leaders are first persuaded that their quest for superiority is unachievable. Only when the Soviet leaders are convinced beyond doubt that we are truly committed to maintaining our deterrent strength will they have any incentive to negotiate seriously on arms reductions. We believe our strategic and INF modernization programs provide the Soviets strong incentives for meaningful, balanced, and mutual force reductions. The fact that they are now negotiating with us on these deep reductions, which in prior years they refused to do, is strong evidence that, despite Soviet rhetoric, our approach is sound.[2]

The desire to control, limit, and ultimately reduce various forms of arms is worthy and rational. However, we must never let arms control become an end in itself. The stakes are too high. If negotiations fail, we must be in a position militarily to protect our interests at least as well as we could have before negotiations began. Any arms control initiative must, therefore, be carefully evaluated in terms of national security objectives and be an instrument of, not a substitute for, a coherent security policy.

Associated measures: a bright spot

There is, however, one aspect of the MBFR proposals that would contribute to military stability in

Central Europe: the so-called associated measures. These are the provisions the West has insisted are necessary to verify compliance with an agreement. The term also refers to measures that can increase each side's confidence that the other will not launch a surprise attack (often called confidence building measures or CBMs). Confidence building measures include such arrangements as advance notice of large-scale maneuvers and the exchange of information.

Associated measures are the only aspect of the current MBFR proposals that complements NATO's strategy for improving its conventional force posture. As NATO modernizes and attempts to counter the adverse changes in the Central European military balance, associated measures offer a means for establishing an inspection program that could expose Warsaw Pact military preparations for a surprise attack. The ability to detect early movement of Pact divisions out of garrison areas, uploading of ammunition and equipment from storage depots, dispersal of tactical aircraft to secondary airfields, and other telltale signs of a surprise attack could give NATO the warning time necessary to mount an effective defense.[3]

Although associated measures were initially offered as a means of verifying compliance with the force reductions proposed by NATO, the measures themselves could provide the foundation for a meaningful agreement. If properly instituted, these measures could make it extremely difficult for either side to achieve surprise in a major attack across the

inter-German border. The forum, however, for developing confidence building measures is not the MBFR negotiations. Because the confidence building measures in MBFR are tied to troop reductions, an agreement on confidence building measures is stalemated.

The only way any MBFR agreement can be reached is if NATO withdraws its requirement for a data base from which to make troop reductions. My biggest concern regarding continued MBFR negotiations is that political pressure to conclude an agreement for agreement's sake may force this type of compromise. The same political pressure would likely prevent a Western walkout from the negotiations, regardless of how disadvantageous they might be. That is why I believe a shift in negotiating forums is in NATO's best interest. The forum I propose is the ongoing Conference on Disarmament in Europe (CDE).

The Conference on Disarmanent in Europe

The Conference on Disarmament in Europe isn't new; it is a part of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) process, a Soviet initiative that began in the late 1960s, with the Conference actually beginning in 1973. The 35 nations participating in CSCE reached an agreement in 1975, known as the Helsinki Final Act. The participating nations agreed to respect human rights, promote solutions to humanitarian problems, expand economic and scientific cooperation, and implement several confidence building measures (CBMs) concerning

military matters.[4] The Final Act CBMs provided for notification of major maneuvers (involving more than 25,000 troops), voluntary notification of smaller-scale maneuvers, and voluntary invitation of observers from other nations to be present at these maneuvers. The provisions applied to all the territory of the participating states except for the Soviet Union; in the case of the Soviet Union, only a strip of land 250 kilometers wide, bordering the territory of other participating nations, was affected.

Despite certain shortcomings, Western countries saw the Final Act measures as a valuable starting point for further negotiations.[5] The next significant step toward establishing meaningful CBMs came in 1978 when the French proposed the 35-nation Conference on Disarmament in Europe to clarify and reduce the regional factors of insecurity that affected all the territory from the Atlantic to the Urals. The French felt that Europe and the Soviet Union should not be considered separately in negotiations, nor should neutral and nonaligned nations be excluded from the conference. The French proposal recognized that each country had the right to voice its opinion and have a say in the decisions reached. The resulting CDE, which the NATO Allies formally proposed at a CSCE review meeting in late 1980, calls for establishing CBMs applying to all of Europe, independent of force reductions or limitations.[6] They are intended, however, to facilitate later negotiations on armaments and manpower reductions throughout Europe.

The official mandate for opening the first stage of CDE was signed on 20 July 1983. Officially known as the Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, the first stage will be devoted to negotiating and adopting a set of complementary confidence and security building measures (CSBMs) designed to reduce the risk of military confrontation in Europe. These measures are intended to forestall and lessen the risks of a surprise attack or political intimidation, which are now possible because of the buildup and imbalance of conventional forces. If the first stage is successful, a second stage will consider ways of limiting and reducing weapon arsenals. The CSBMs will affect all of Europe and the surrounding ocean areas and air space. These measures will be militarily significant and politically binding, and they will be backed up with adequate forms of verification.[7]

The importance of the Conference on Disarmament in Europe lies in having specific, concrete, and obligatory CSBMs which must precede disarmament discussions. These measures would include an exchange of information on the location of forces and their command structures, prior notification of major military activities and maneuvers, and compulsory observation and verification. They are not intended to replace or undermine the legitimacy of defense efforts; their purpose is to reduce the risks of surprise attack or political intimidation by increasing the visibility of military activities, and to minimize the risks of misinterpretation of the other side's intentions, particularly in the event of a serious crisis in Europe. They make it possible to regulate military activities

and forestall any attempt to destabilize or increase tensions.

But as Lawrence Eagleburger, former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, recently asked, why should we make another agreement with the Soviet Union at a time when serious questions have been raised about Soviet compliance with previous agreements? The answer is that the United States and its European Allies believe it is critical to seek progress in conventional arms control because war in Europe is more likely to begin with conventional forces than with a nuclear exchange.[8]

I do not mean to imply that CDE has no weaknesses. Because of the diversity of interests represented in the 35-nation conference, reaching a consensus probably will be difficult and time-consuming. Similarly, because CDE is a multilateral forum rather than a bilateral or "bloc to bloc" negotiation, the United States and its NATO Allies probably will have less influence on negotiating procedures and outcomes. In addition, the NATO–Warsaw Pact military balance in Central Europe may seem less critical when considered in the context of all Europe, leading to an agreement that is less meaningful from NATO's perspective.

Nevertheless, CDE represents a fresh approach that should genuinely help stabilize the confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Moreover, it is a logical and more realistic way for NATO, as a conventionally inferior force, to deal with its problems. Until NATO force improvements can

close the gap in conventional forces, reaction time is very crucial to NATO's reinforcing its forward defense. NATO must do everything possible to preclude a surprise attack or intimidation through the threat of attack.

Another advantage of CDE is that it expands the area of negotiation to include all of Europe and the Soviet Union west of the Urals. It presents an opportunity for cohesion and solidarity in Europe, which will help prevent the Soviets from creating divisions among the Europeans and between the Europeans and their allies in Canada and the United States. By including the European territory of the Soviet Union, CDE will also prevent the geographical disaparities that exist in the MBFR proposals from recurring in future force reduction formulas.

Although manpower and armament reductions are worthy goals, NATO is not in a position to accept either right now. A mutual reduction agreement would only further destabilize the confrontation in Central Europe—to NATO's disadvantage. That's why CDE, which starts slowly by trying to negotiate confidence and security building measures that are militarily advantageous to both alliances and have a good chance of success, is the best way of attacking the problem.

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The Author

LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILLIAM R. BOWMAN, US Air Force, wrote this monograph while assigned as a Senior Fellow at the National Defense University and a student at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, from which he is a 1984 graduate. Immediately before his year as a Senior Fellow, he was an Associate Research Fellow in the NDU Strategic Concepts Development Center.

Lieutenant Colonel Bowman holds a Bachelor's Degree in International Affairs from the US Air Force Academy and an MBA from Auburn University. He is also a distinguished graduate of both the Squadron Officer School and the Air Command and Staff College.

Lieutenant Colonel Bowman is a pilot with approximately 3,000 hours of flying experience, his most recent operational assignment before coming to NDU having been at Zweibrucken Air Base, West Germany, from 1975 to 1979. He has also worked as

an Action Officer in the Europe-NATO Division of the Directorate of Plans, Headquarters, US Air Force; and as Aide to the Air Force Chief of Staff. His current assignment is with the 62d Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, Bergstrom Air Force Base, Texas.

LIMITING CONVENTIONAL FORCES
IN EUROPE

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